



# The International Fancy Guppy Association



Dedicated to Promoting The Fancy Guppy Hobby

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## Two Fish Rooms

By Alan Opdyke

Not that I am especially proud of my resent mistakes and errors but it is with the expressed purpose of possibly helping someone else along the line that I write this article.

When Lynn and I got back into the Fancy Guppy hobby a few years back we originally had a few tanks in our family room that quickly became 30 tanks in the bedroom vacated by our son who joined the U. S Marines.

Obviously I was not satisfied with 30 tanks but that was all this room could hold due to it's size and the fact our house is built up off the ground about 3 ½ feet with a craw space under it for maintenance, heating and cooling equipment, etc. The weight of more than 30 tanks I felt would be too much for the sub floor. Well, we are fortunate that not only did we have a regular two-car garage that most homes in this area have but also we had an additional garage in the back. This building is 28 feet long and 16 feet wide and it pretty much served as our basement for storage of our things along with all the yard stuff. It also had a very thick and level concrete floor and the more we thought about it (get the "we" in there?) it seemed like a good idea to convert part of this garage to a fish room. So the project began.

I laid out the floor so that the room would be about 12 foot in the back of the building, which made it just under 12 x 16 inside measurements. It had one window, which was ideal, and the rest was easy to plan. I put up the new wall, which, of course, had a doorway to enter the fish room from the front part of the garage. I insulated it very well, maybe too tight, and ran a water line and a 220-volt electric service from the house. I installed a small water heater, a laundry sink, and a "Through the Wall Heat Pump" which is actually one of the units used for motel rooms. A friend of ours got it for us direct from Carrier at cost.

At this point the room is starting to take shape and really looked great, to me at least. I bought the cheapest paneling I could find which was ¼" thick, was not really wood but pressed board, and it had a covering on it to make the paneling look like wood that was actually a film of some sort. Not necessarily my first mistake but a mistake for sure. I put up a shelf near the ceiling for my blower and installed all the PVC airlines etc. I then hooked up my plumbing to the water heater and the laundry sink. The room really looked good to me now.

I had visited several fish rooms in my travels and noticed right away that a lot of people used concrete blocks and 2 x 4s for racks as opposed to either shelving or all 2 x 4 construction. This method does take up a lot of space as one row of blocks stacked up is almost a ten gallon tank wide but the ease of construction and the fact that it all comes out level made the decision to go this route easy for me. I phoned and e-mailed Bill Carwile several times to see just how he had his blocks spaced and he was most helpful with providing not only one suggestion but three different ways the blocks could be set up. I ended up with something a bit different but without Bill's help I never would have gotten the way I have it.

I settled in on having a standard block on the floor, which is 8" high. Then I put on the 2 x 4 racking, which I stood on end with the smallest side resting on the block. Next I put two full blocks and a 2" thick block giving me 18", almost, before putting the next 2 x 4 frame for the middle row. I then repeated this with two more full blocks and a 2" thick block and then the 2 x 4s for the top row. The building people, by the way, call the 2" block, a "patio block" if you go looking for it. I have five ten-gallon tanks between blocks, or supports, and I think one could put six but I was afraid to. This looked good so it was time to move fish. Lynn and I spent an entire day siphoning water and moving fish, tanks, filters etc.

For the first two weeks all was well. Then we noticed a little buckling in the paneling. Not to drag this out but in about three weeks the paneling had buckled so badly it actually put so much pressure on one tank, it broke. The walls were growing mildew and the place looked terrible. I was not a happy camper.

I talked to the building supply people and others I trusted and found several things were wrong. The paneling I selected would never have worked even if I had done some other things right. The room was actually too tight and was totally closed as the blower furnishing air was actually in the room too.

Here is what I did. I removed all the paneling and installed outdoor siding, which comes in 4 x 8 sheets, and is a product called T1-11. It appears to be individual 2" boards and goes up really well. This meant, by the way, disconnecting all plumbing to the sink and water heater and moving all my racks and tanks. This was a very time consuming job of course and I am one that hates to do something twice. I moved the blower to the outer part of the garage, which means all the air furnished to the tanks, comes from outside the fish room. I then installed a small exhaust fan with three inch piping like to ones used in bathrooms in the home.

All is well now. The only thing is I am sore in every muscle and a bit embarrassed about my mistakes. But then to think of it I have learned a lot of things the hard way!



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